1: Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

names and of the beliefs associated with Tangaroa in Polynesia, ranging from Micronesia to South China, it may be worth pointing out that in many parts of the Northern New Hebrides, *ta-* is a personal prefix meaning "man of." Thus, in the language of Atchin, with which I am most familiar, *ta-Ba* means "man of Oba," and *ta-Mbū* "man of Ambrim," or, as the natives put it when speaking pidgin-English, "man Oba" and "man Ambrim."[1] In the same way, the familiar Melanesian word for "ghost," which in Vao is *ta-mat* and in Atchin *ta-mats*, is simply the word *mat* or *mats* meaning "dead" prefixed by the same personal particle *ta-*. So also, in Malo, where *nunu* means "shadow" or "reflexion," *ta-nunu* means "soul."[2] It is of course true that the personal prefix *ta-* does not occur in Polynesia, but if, as is held by more than one authority, including Dr. Haddon, the belief in Tangaroa went to Polynesia *via* Melanesia, it is nevertheless possible that the original name of the god may have been akin to the existing Big Nambas form Horo, and that the prefix *ta-* became attached to it in Melanesia but was unrecognised as such in Polynesia, whither the word Tangaroa proceeded as a single word. In the Banks Islands, where Kwat takes the place of Tagaro, we find a form closely allied to Big Nambas Horo in the name of Kwat's mother, Kwatgoro.[3]

Myths connected with this deity mirror social organisation.

Without wishing to stress this suggestion unduly, let us return to an examination of the problems connected with the belief in this deity in the area dealt with in this book. We have already seen how, in Vao, Ta-ghar created the first man and woman, and is held responsible for the "perfect" organisation of Pete-hul into four Quarters, and how this myth is paralleled by the creation by Takaro of four groups in the village of Logueguea on Oba.[4] It is thus clear that the legends concerning him are closely bound up with the existing organisation of society in areas in which they are told. The more usual number associated with this deity is ten, seen in the ten brothers he is said to have in North Raga,[5] and the ten sons which he is said to have had on Oba.[6] On Atchin, the corresponding deity Ta-har is closely associated with ten brothers who correspond with the division of each village, for ritual purposes, into ten families, and there can be little doubt the number ten associated with Tagaro in North Raga and Oba has a similar connexion with the organisation of society there too.

[1] Thus also, with the vowel-change invariably occurring in the Small Islands before certain combinations of letters, *to-Vao* means "man of Vao," *to-Tsan* (in the Vao language *to-San*) "man of Atchin," *to-Wala* "man of Wala," *to-Rano* "man of Rano," *ti-Era* "man of Raga," etc.

[2] Ivens, 4, p. 45.

[3] Codrington, 3, p. 156.

[4] See p. 163.

[5] Codrington, 3, p. 169.

[6] Ibid. p. 171. According to Suas, 1912, pp. 45-7, he makes ten men of clay. One of these he transforms into a woman by knocking off his genitals; this woman becomes the mother of two sons, representing the two matrilineal moieties.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
0012 Malekula 0012

sen and his *mugh vel* is a very close one; indeed, the former has complete sexual rights over his boy. . . . The boy accompanies his 'husband' everywhere; works in his garden (it is for this reason that a chief has many boy-lovers), and if one or other of the two should die, the survivor will mourn him deeply. . . .

"Whether it is the *nilagh sen* who is asked to play the part of *dubut* [guardian] during the circumcision rites is not certain, but after the arrangements for circumcising the lad have been made, the *dubut* has exclusive sexual rights over him. He is now the boy's 'husband' and is extremely jealous of any other man, not excepting the guardians of other boys, securing his *mugh vel* and having intercourse with him. So much is this the case that he will not allow him out of his sight. The *dubut* himself, however, cannot have sexual access to the boy throughout all the thirty days' seclusion which accompanies the circumcision rites. From the time of the operation until the wound is healed, intercourse is forbidden, and the *dubut* only plays the part of a guardian who cares for the novice's physical needs. But when the wound is healed he resumes his 'marital' rights and continues to have relations with the boy until some time later the latter purchases his bark-belt. The reason, or rather the rationalisation, which the natives put forward for their homosexual practices is that the boy-lover's male organ is caused to grow strong and large by the homosexual acts of his 'husband.' This growth of the penis is supposed to be complete by the time that the bark-belt is assumed." [1]

On the thirtieth day the novices issue from their seclusion, and each purchases his newly won penis-wrapper from his maternal uncle. "He does not acquire the bark-belt on this occasion, but at some later date (the length of interval was not stated and probably varies) the erstwhile novice pays his *dubut* a few coconuts or some tobacco for it. Until this payment is made the *dubut* continues to have homosexual relations with the lad, but when once the latter has assumed his bark-belt this bond is severed and he, being now a 'man,' can take a boy-lover himself." [2]

Homosexuality symbolises a spiritual connexion between the living and the dead in the male line of descent.

It is, I think, quite clear from this, and from the facts that organised homosexuality is associated with circum-incision also in Raga and that neither are found elsewhere in the group, that, whatever may be the various causes of homosexuality in other parts of the world, it is here definitely connected with circum-incision. In seeking a reason for this we must, I think, be careful not to dismiss as pure rationalisation the natives' statement recorded by Deacon that the reason for homosexual acts is to make the boy-lover's organ grow strong.[3] Such fantasies are

[1] Deacon, 4, pp. 260-2. [2] Ibid., 4, p. 267.
[3] Compare also the Tanna belief that the operation itself makes a man fruitful (see footnote p. 479).

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

common with homosexuals among ourselves, and in the special case now being considered we have to remember two facts. First of these is the high esteem in which the penis is held, as seen in the extreme reverence for the glans due to the operation which is itself a sacrifice. In the second place, the Big Nambas represent an extreme form of patrilineal culture which they have carried to a pitch exceeding all other New Hebrides tribes in the very low status which they accord to women. It would appear, therefore, that both circum-incision and organised homosexuality are an expression of the extreme holiness of men over against women and of the triumph of patrilineal descent over the former matrilineal system. In this way, just as in the Maki on Vao the continuity of divine inspiration is transmitted to each generation by means of physical contact with the kava root held by the Speaker who himself represents all those ancestors who have previously performed the rite,[1] so I suggest that among the Big Nambas the act of homosexuality may well represent to the natives a similar transmission of male power by physical means. That this power comes, moreover, from the ancestors in direct succession and not merely from the active partner in the union, and is therefore a spiritual conception, is shown, I think, by one of the "hoaxes" recorded from Lambumbu. In these hoaxes the actors, who themselves have, of course, already been initiated, represent ghosts, and on one occasion a number of them "lie down on their backs, in such a way that the feet of one man rest by the head of the next. In this way a file of prostrate bodies is made to reach from the door of the seclusion hut as far as the gongs. *Nevar*[2] leaves (such as are used for cooking puddings) are then rolled up, strapped around with others and fastened to the men so that they reach, like gigantic penises, from one man's middle, across his belly, chest, and head, almost to the next man's testicles. These men now lie with their eyes shut and sing in a faint mysterious manner. It is dark. The candidates are led out and made to go up and pull the huge penises, which wobble in a terrifying manner."[3] We have already seen that the upright slit gongs represent ancestors, so that, despite the farcical nature of the hoax, which is in keeping with all such performances in North Malekula and the Small Islands, there can be little doubt that the intention is to symbolise continuity with the ancestral ghosts in the male line by means of the homosexual act. So, just as in some matrilineal communities the female line of descent is conceived of as an umbilical cord joining all generations to the first ancestress, so here the continuous penis unites all those belonging to the male line of descent.

Once the practice of homosexuality became established, though primarily on spiritual grounds, it is easy to see how by a process of secular-

[1] See pp. 282, 376.

[2] Atchin *re-wer*.

[3] Deacon, 4, pp. 253-4. For other hoaxes see ibid. pp. 253-5, 263-6; also Harrisson, 2, pp. 47-8. Yet others will be given in my forthcoming work on Atchin.

1:Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
OO12 Malekula OO12

839
851
182

isation it could be adopted as an everyday practice in the manner described by Deacon, and has led also to the adoption of the very large penis-wrappers worn by these men.

Active homosexuality in circum-incision areas replaced in the Small Islands by threats of homosexual action on the part of ghosts.

So much for the Big Nambas. From Raga, the only other area from which organised homosexuality has been reported, we have no details by which to test the validity or otherwise of what has just been suggested.

When we turn to those tribes in this area which practise only the simpler operation of incision, we find that, though homosexuality exists among them, it is unorganised and not carried to anything like the same extent as among the Big Nambas.[1] Thus in the Small Islands though novices address their tutors (or guardians), as among the Big Nambas, as "husband" and in some cases the tutor reciprocates by calling his novice his "wife," they do not necessarily have homosexual relations and the terminology does not extend into secular life, but, on the contrary, the novices throughout the rites are constantly threatened with homosexual action on the part of ghosts.

Relation between incision and circum-incision.

838
304
171

Such threats without action suggest the possibility that the whole motive of ghostly homosexuality has been derived from the circum-incision area, and in this case Rivers may be right in regarding incision as being a degraded form of circum-incision, though not on the grounds he states. On the other hand, the Small Islands attitude towards ritual homosexuality as a spiritual phenomenon connected almost exclusively with ghosts and with initiation may indicate a more archetypal view. In this case circum-incision as an exaggerated form of incision would fall into line with other exaggerated forms of culture indulged in by the Big Nambas such as their extreme cannibalism and the incessant wars they wage among themselves.

I do not propose to attempt to solve this problem, but will content myself with pointing out the fact that, while the operation of incision is spread over almost the whole of the Southern and Central New Hebrides, circum-incision as practised among the Big Nambas and in South Raga occurs only in the extreme north of this area. Here also the moot point is raised as to whether it is the starting-point from which the degraded practice of incision spread south or whether, since according to Codrington incision came from the south, it is an ultimate development and is itself an exaggerated form of incision. In this respect it must be remembered that Codrington's evidence rests on the very slender foundation of a purely local movement from Ambrim to Raga a[illegible]y recently northwards to Maewo. But since any coastal moveme[illegible]ding from Malekula to

[1] See p. 487.

3: Harrisson N-5 (1934-1935) 1936
0012 Malekula 0012
Atchin

busia introduced to destroy mosquito larvae; the movements of hill people to the sea controlled; no women should be allowed to work on a plantation. If these steps are taken the physical conservation of the bushman may be achieved.

The cultural conservation technique cannot be expressed so concretely. It is too late to preserve the pattern complete. There is however a good alternative, and I can best give my point of view by describing a concrete example of what can happen with proper guidance or good luck, as on the island of Atchin.

(ii) *Atchin*, 1935.—There is no doubt that on small islands a mile or less across health is much better and *Anopheles* mosquitoes are often absent. They are the small island populations which are increasing most rapidly throughout the group, though some are still decreasing, and in these islands I see the best future of the race. Most have mainly mission populations, but on some heathens are dominant. One such is Atchin, half a mile off the east coast of Malekula; of the four hundred and eighty natives less than two dozen are Christians. A Seventh Day Adventist missionary lived there for many years, and all the other missions maintain native teachers there. The missions have had no success, but the natives got some ideas from them which they have incorporated into their own culture. More valuable has proved the visit of an anthropologist, John W. Layard. He was there more than twenty years ago, but to this day is remembered as Tsoni (Johnny). He gained a remarkable understanding of the Atchinese, and his sympathy greatly encouraged the people to keep up their old heathen customs. Like all Hebrideans, the Atchinese sold land to the whites for a few guns in the early days. Unlike all the rest, they have since bought it back. Their country is their own. As their yam gardens are on the mainland, they are expert canoeists; they still keep up the old canoe voyages to Ambrym, trading penis-wrappers for pigs; to Malo, Santo, and east Malekula. The old turmeric-dye leaf trade has been taken over by French ships, and for some years now there has been no ritual sex-initiation voyage to Omba, home of the benign deity Ta-har (= Tagaro). The best fishermen, whole villages club their copra together to get a modern European drag net; but do not let decay the ancient stone-wall trap, a sort of lobster-pot, and the special handnets for the Palolo worm, which at certain seasons appears in millions, giving its name to three of the lunar months. They run their own stores and sell their own copra to the highest bidder of the several ships that call in search of this lucrative trade. They encourage whites to visit but not to stop. They make sham spears to sell to world-touring yachts which call regularly to see these remarkably safe savages; the real spears they do not show. They have twice done all their dances for film companies, in no way to the detriment of the dance culture or significance, rather the opposite. Baker (1935, p. 212) says of the Sakaus, Santo: "If they had been persuaded to dance for the tourists it would have been the beginning of the break-up of their culture, in which dancing plays an important part. . . . The prostitution of their culture by tourists would be deleterious not only to themselves but also to social anthropology." Apart from the fact that the Sakaus have unfortunately lost, almost forgotten, the whole dance-cycle of the highest chiefly grade (*vuster*), and that the special dance for the marriage of a